

MAINE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Review Team Report

Program Approval Visit

University of Maine at Fort Kent

Division of Education

Fort Kent, Maine

March 22-25, 2015

Program Review Team

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I. Introduction

This report is based upon evidence identified through review, as per Maine's Chapter 114, of the University of Maine at Fort Kent's (UMFK) request for renewal of state approval for their undergraduate programs in Elementary Education, Secondary Education in Social Studies, Secondary Education in Life Science, Secondary Education in English/Language Arts, Modern and Classical Languages (K-12), and Computer Technology (K-12). In addition, UMFK requests review and approval of their new degree program in Secondary Education in Mathematics. The visiting team reviewed UMFK's Status Report for the Maine State Department of Education (dated January 30, 2015), supporting exhibits; interviews with faculty, administrators, students, graduates, educators, and other stakeholders; and school visits that took place during the on-site visit that occurred March 22-25, 2015.

The University of Maine at Fort Kent is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The University has been preparing future teachers for over 125 years. The relationship between the university and the community is strong and mutually beneficial as attested to by faculty and school-based partners alike. Founded in 1878, UMFK, formerly the Madawaska Training School, exclusively trained young men and women to be teachers. Today UMFK's Education Division prepares individuals to teach at the elementary (K-8) and secondary levels (7-12) in Life Science, Modern Classical Languages, English, Social Studies, Technology Education and Mathematics. The university offers candidates liberal arts course work in the areas they will be teaching and a core general education program that allow them to develop academic competencies, communications and critical thinking skills. In addition, future teachers complete the professional education major.

Since 2013, in response to progress on the 2010 program review and other reports, the university and Division have been going through a "revitalization process." Efforts that have emerged from this process include adoption, at the university level, of an outcomes focused general education initiative and instituted a portfolio assessment system for which this year's (2014-2015) freshmen will be the first to experience. This initiative is still in the early stages of development. Another of the university's foci is recruitment and increasing yield among those who express interest and apply. The Division wants to contribute to this effort by clearly articulating what is unique and special about UMFK's education program and their recently created lab program as a unique feature. The division chair noted that frequent and early field experiences are not necessarily unique, but that engaging practicing educators as instructors in the labs is. The division's lab initiative also dovetails with the broader university's growing focus on experiential learning.

UMFK's Division of Education leads the professional education unit and is responsible for the development and approval of the course work and experiences that makes up the core curriculum of our educational programs. Divisions are autonomous structures that have their own defined budget and both initiate and are responsible for curriculum changes, which then move to a university-wide academic council and then on to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Division chairs report directly to the VPAA and sit on the President's cabinet. The Division has full-time faculty members, some of whom have informal joint appointments with other divisions (e.g., environmental science and history) and enjoys active involvement of liberal

arts faculty members and school-based educators who serve as instructors, mentors, and host teachers. The unit is advised by the Education Advisory Committee, which is made up of faculty and field-based instructors, hosts, and mentors. This group meets for regular dinner meetings and has an 80-85% participation rate according to the division chair. The review team also heard repeated reference to these meetings during interviews. Finally, the program gains additional feedback from students through regular breakfast meetings, which are scheduled on days when all students have education classes and the chair reports that 80-90% of the students attend.

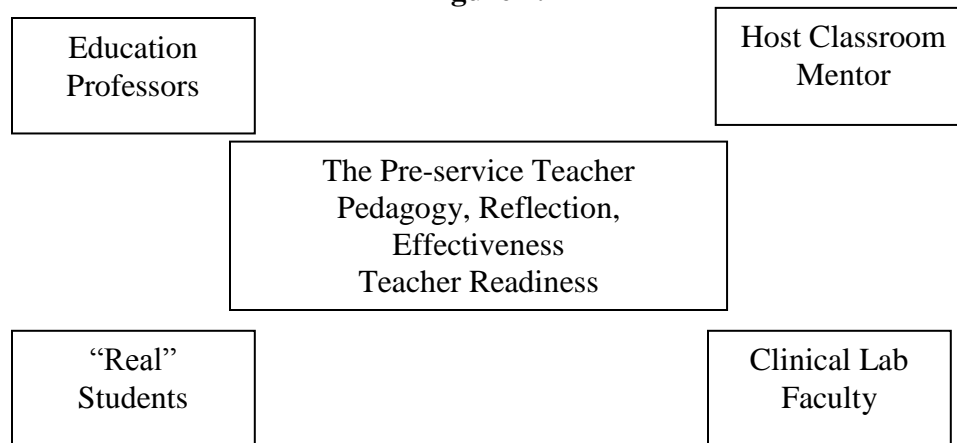
The most significant response to feedback from the Advisory board was the development of the lab experiences in response to the identified need for more fieldwork and a more organized process for field experience placements. The Lab courses, associated with each methods course and supported by the Education Advisory Team, are a foundational component of the HPEM. Through the labs, candidates are placed in schools prior to their student teaching experience, which gives them hands-on learning opportunities and helps to make the connections between theory and practice a reality. According to the division chair, the relationship of the courses and the labs is that courses can focus on learning theory and labs focus on the nuts and bolts of any specific strategy (e.g. how to use a white board).

II. Summary of the Unit's Conceptual Framework

The mission of the Division of Education is to prepare students as undergraduate teachers who are prepared to be reflective scholars, instructional leaders, and global citizens. Faculty and school-based partners often talked about their students as being “classroom ready” when they graduate. According to the program faculty, becoming a reflective practitioner is the basis of the entire program, with the anticipation that candidates will actively analyze their teaching practices and the educational, social, and political contexts in which their teaching is embedded. Reflection is demonstrated in the program through field-based logs in which candidates not only record their volunteer and lab hours, but also reflect on what they see and understand about learning contexts. Reflection is also required in course work and the creation of portfolios both before and during student teaching.

The Division has also articulated a conceptual framework in its self-study and referred to it as the Holistic Pre-service Experience Model (HPEM) (Figure 1).

Figure 1.1



According to the self-study report, the conceptual framework is founded upon the theoretical foundations of progressivism, constructivism, standards-based pedagogy and assessment, and practices that support differentiation. When asked to explain the relationship between the Division’s mission and the conceptual framework, the chair described the mission as the overarching structure that guides the program’s development of “empowered teachers” and that the conceptual framework articulates the “kinds for traits”, or skills, the program thinks any teacher needs to be empowered. During interviews with faculty, staff, partners, and students the review team confirmed this relationship. Interviewees, however, appeared to have greater awareness of the division’s mission than the conceptual framework. The review team heard repeated reference to “empowerment” by members of the faculty and field-based instructors. The review team also heard a generally pragmatic focus on skills and practices in coursework and field placement. While members of the faculty and field-based instructors were aware of the conceptual framework, having discussed it and contributed input during Education Advisory Committee dinner meetings since 2013, students were less aware of the conceptual framework. The review team did not find explicit reference to the conceptual framework in course or lab syllabi.

III. Summary of Findings for Each Standard

Standard One: Initial Teacher Candidate Performance

Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

A. Findings

Evidence indicates that the mission of UMFK's program is to prepare candidates who are "classroom ready" and that the program fulfills this mission by ensuring that their candidates are proficient in each area of Maine's common core teaching (MCCT) standards. Critical to this preparation is the blending of core methods courses, clinical lab classes, and 250 hours of pre-student teaching practicum experiences in schools and classrooms. Candidates then demonstrate their proficiency on the standards in their sixteen-week student teaching experience and document their proficiency in their portfolios.

Students are made aware of the standards for which they are responsible by course instructors, advisors, and in syllabi (although the presence of the standards in the syllabi and their relationship to course outcomes was somewhat inconsistent). Nevertheless, the review team determined that coursework adequately covers the elements as articulated in the MCCT standards and students appear to have more than adequate opportunity to see, apply, and practice the MCCT standards in schools and classrooms through their courses and associated field experiences. A point of strength in the program is the inclusion of two courses that address the needs of students with disabilities and those whose academic needs are best addressed through Response to Intervention systems. These two courses exceed the expectations of state requirements and integrate models that are currently in place in schools today. While the program includes a course on the multi-cultural aspects of education, the program could be further enhanced by more specifically addressing the needs of English language learners.

The one-credit, education course lab system is a relatively new feature to the program, developed in response to feedback in the most recent past review and from the Education Advisory Committee. The structure of the labs is that they are strategically connected to specific courses and require students to engage in classrooms for two hours per week per lab. As many students take up to three courses with lab and field requirements at a time in their junior and first semester of senior year, the unit has organized the course schedule so that an entire day is free of education class and students can spend an entire day in a host school. The primary goal of the labs, as articulated by faculty, instructors, and students alike, is to give student early experiences in the classroom so that they are well informed of what teaching and learning look like and have hands-on experience prior to student teaching. Additionally, the intention of the lab is to give faculty opportunities to focus on learning theory and model in their course content while lab instructors give students more practical and applied opportunities to use the tools and strategies introduced in courses. Finally, the fact that school-based personnel are the lab instructors (i.e., current teachers and administrators in schools) builds the partnership model of the UMFK program and gives all stakeholders greater shared interest in the candidate outcomes. The team

saw and heard evidence of strong advocacy of the program by school personnel and a symbiotic relationship between the schools and university.

While expectations and responsibilities of both teachers and students during field-based experiences associated with labs are articulated and shared, the team did hear some desire on the part of students for more coordination and more guidance about what they are to be accomplishing in their time in the classroom. Although all of the students to whom the team spoke talked about the value of the time spent in classrooms, some wanted to move beyond simply observing and were unsure about how and when to do this.

In general, observations of pedagogy courses and conversations with candidates and faculty revealed a strong emphasis on important practical skills (e.g. strategies for managing hands-on materials during lessons, approaches to identifying and selecting digital resources to provide students with opportunities to practice mathematical skills, etc.). This emphasis on practical skills often overshadowed discussion about cognitive or conceptual goals, particularly in the context of pedagogy courses where candidates had different disciplinary backgrounds (e.g. in *Secondary Methods 2* where candidates were focused on English, Life Science, or Mathematics).

The program has articulated distinct benchmarks prior to student teaching and at program completion. The implementation of this benchmark system appears to be most rigorously implemented at the application for student teaching point. In the last couple of years the unit has taken steps to support students along their way toward their student teaching application. Specifically, responsibility for introducing and supporting students toward the pre-student teaching benchmark was given to specific faculty in targeted courses. The review team also found there to be adequate supports for students to be successful through the pre-student teaching benchmark. UMFK's tutoring services are accessible and widely used, the STEPS program offers students a community of learners who share expertise and experience, and the unit has recently purchased a site license for practice Praxis I tests. The expectation is that prior to student teaching all key assessment must be passed, including Praxis I and II. The Title II pass rates for the unit, however, range from 60 to about 90% over the past few years. The relationship between these outcomes and the start of student teaching remains unclear.

The most highly developed step in the assessment system is the pre-student teaching portfolio review. When students are ready for student teaching they present their pre-student teaching portfolio for review. Reviewers include peers, who give feedback, and the education faculty who score the adequacy of the evidence on the 11 MCCT standards. The review team then deems the student ready for student teaching.

In addition to the pre-student teaching benchmark, the unit uses a non-academic alert system that assesses candidates' dispositions and serves as a mechanism for targeted action that can lead to improvement, change, growth, or counseling out of the program. The program is to be commended on their development and use of an assessment for dispositions tool, which appears to be effectively used in conjunction with the unit's non-academic alert system.

During student teaching, candidates re-build their portfolio with evidence from their two, 8-week student teaching placements. This portfolio is assessed twice during student teaching: once

formatively and the final assessment (by the student, mentor, and supervisor) is summative in nature and determines the candidates proficiency on the MCCT standards. The portfolio review process was described by candidates, faculty members, and mentor teachers. The review team, however, did not see evidence from student teaching nor did the team see evidence of students' performance in the field (e.g., observation notes from supervisors, candidates' reflections on lessons implemented, etc.). Therefore, while there is a system in place to support and assess student teachers against the MCCT standards, this review team was unable to determine the extent to which this process is carried out.

The review team saw and read evidence of student work related to each of the MCCT standards. In their presentation of this evidence, however, the program did not necessarily make clear how and to what extent the candidates' work actually met the standards. In some cases it was unclear how the documents in the evidence room and online aligned with the MCCTS they were associated with since there was no reflection by program faculty describing the match or whether the student evidence did actually meet the proficiency standard.

B. Commendations

- The structure of the program, which includes early and frequent field placements that are integrated with course work and led by field-based instructors (practicing educators and host teachers), serves the candidates well to prepare them for student teaching.
- An assessment of dispositions tool is in place and effectively used in conjunction with the unit's non-academic alert system. This is commendable given the challenge of assessing dispositions, the systematic nature of the assessment, and the clarity of feedback it gives students.
- Based on program review and the unit faculty's understanding of their candidates' performances, the curriculum has been adjusted to reinstate an assessment course into the program of study.
- The course work addresses the needs of students from diverse and special needs populations at levels above the expectations of the state requirements and integrates models that are currently in place in schools today. This could be further enhanced by more specifically addressing the needs of English language learners.

C. Recommendations

- The unit should ensure that candidates have opportunities to offer and receive critical feedback about the discipline-specific conceptual or cognitive dimensions of instruction. That is to say, the team recommends that the unit look for ways in which students build pedagogical content knowledge of the various disciplines in order to move beyond a mechanistic view of teaching tools and strategies.
- While the unit has defined assessment benchmarks each year of the candidates' undergraduate career, they would be well served to more systematically collect, monitor, and follow up on candidate progress data at these benchmark points.
- The unit needs to more systematically gather and utilize direct observational evidence of candidates' performance in the field to inform programmatic decisions.

D. Review Team Decision

This Standard is *MET*.

Standard Two: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation

The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the qualifications of applicants, the performance of candidates and graduates, and on unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

A. Findings

The self-study, supporting documents, and interviews with faculty and staff indicate that the Unit is committed to strengthening assessment practices. For the past decade, the Unit has been collecting and utilizing feedback from a variety of stakeholders. Major program changes, especially in the area of increased field placements, came directly from feedback from candidates and community partners. Evidence collected through multiple interviews and a review of the artifacts also indicates that the unit faculty is mapping curriculum and assessments to standards.

Candidate Performance

The unit assesses the candidates through well-established benchmarks and gateways. The unit's benchmarks evaluate candidate readiness in three core areas: essential knowledge, candidate performance and critical dispositions of educators. These benchmarks are shared with candidates throughout the program, primarily during the semester breakfast meeting, with the Student Teaching Education Professional Society (STEPS) club, during student advising, and then within core classes of the program (e.g., EDU 339 *Classroom Management* and EDU 335 *Computers in the Classroom*).

Candidates are assessed according to the following criteria:

- Maintain a 2.5 GPA throughout their entire course of study
- Completion of a Proficiency-Based General Education Portfolio –based on University Outcomes
- Maintain a “C” or better in all professional coursework, including lab courses
- Complete 75 hours of Volunteer time in early classes – Elementary (25 hours Secondary)
- Complete 250 Hours of Early Field Experiences
- Pass Praxis I exams
- Pass Praxis II content exam
- Complete a Proficiency-Based Professional Portfolio –based on MCCTS
- Demonstrate performance proficiency in their core classes
- Demonstrate proficiency in essential teacher dispositions throughout the program (non-academic alert system)
- Complete 16 week student teaching practicum

These criteria are reviewed for each candidate as they progress through the program. Lack of competence in any area will prompt a dialogue with the candidate usually in the form of a conference with their academic advisor. This information is ultimately collected and organized by the division administrative support and then is utilized by the unit director and the Director of Student Teaching to determine student teaching eligibility.

There is sufficient evidence that demonstrates the unit is currently taking action based on the analysis of candidate assessment. The three areas of current action are centered on providing more Praxis examination preparation, utilizing disposition surveys, and the continual refinement and organization of the field placements. However, much of this data is not currently organized or stored in one easily accessible location or format. The unit is interested in exploring the option to obtain the TK20 data management system for this purpose.

Unit Evaluation

The unit systematically collects and analyzes a variety of data from a diverse group of stakeholders. This data is collected primarily through surveys, and there is sufficient evidence that it is then reviewed in divisional meetings. For example, with the development of the Holistic Pre-service Experience Model, the division collected data in regards to their new lab classes and the pre-student teaching practicums that are attached to the lab. This data was collected from the unit's methods course faculty, clinical lab faculty, cooperating teachers, and the candidates in the courses. A direct result from these surveys is the current plan to combine the Social Studies and Science Education labs into an integrated content lab.

These unit evaluation data measures include:

- Variety of survey data from stakeholders
- Survey data from Alumni – based on program effectiveness
- Survey data from teacher candidates - based on program effectiveness
- Course evaluations – both core classes and lab classes
- Portfolio review of students
- Praxis Data
- Retention and Recruitment data

There is an abundance of evidence that supports the strong ties the unit has with local stakeholders. These ties have been strengthened with the integration of the new labs that feature current practitioners as lab instructors. This new feature has allowed both increased collaboration and support from local teachers. The candidates also benefit from the lab instructors being partnered with university faculty and cooperating teachers so that they have three different perspectives of the content. Additionally, there are planned opportunities for dialog between unit faculty and local stakeholders in the form of dinners held each semester where information (e.g., strategic plan, unit self study, Praxis information, etc.) is disseminated to stakeholders and feedback is elicited in the form of surveys and informal conversation.

The unit has a systematic data collection system, however, due to the small size of the unit a lot of the collection and analysis of this data appears to be more informal in nature rather than formal. For example, the criteria items are compiled by a variety of people from a variety of sources without clear documentation to support it. There is certainly data to support changes and documentation that change has occurred, but the rationalization or justification is not apparent. Ample and comprehensive data from a variety of surveys and Praxis information was available, but not samples of core and lab class evaluations. We are certain that this data is collected as part of university and unit policy, but we did not see any samples. It is also assumed that this data

impacts program and course development, but again it is only inferred through conversations with unit faculty and adjuncts.

In terms of the state review process as a summative assessment, there were some concerns with the lack of depth of the evidence provided for each standard. There was a significant absence of evidence to determine if several of the standards had been met. For example, for Standard Five the only materials provided were faculty resumes and vitas, and should have also included items such as samples of faculty publications and other scholarly activities, faculty evaluations, and professional development activities.

As a consequence of this lack of depth, the review process met with obstacles. While some of the materials needed more time to prepare, the unit should have made requests and preparations for such materials in a timely manner to facilitate the review as opposed to losing time in searching for alternative measures.

B. Commendations

- The unit has increased communication, collaboration and partnerships with local schools in the form of community dinners, surveys, feedback, as well further involving local teachers in the recently developed lab model. It is apparent that local teachers appreciate being a part of the teacher preparation process.

C. Recommendations.

- Continue to explore options for a robust and strategic data management system that will support the development, documentation, and maintenance of comprehensive candidate and program assessment.
- The proper evidence to satisfy each standard needs to be present to assist the review team in completing the process. The acquisition, or permissions to obtain, materials should be initiated at the time of the self-study delivery. This would have alleviated excessive dependency on the support staff during the review team visit.

D. Review Team Decision.

This Standard is *MET*.

Standard Three: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The unit and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills, necessary to help all students learn.

A. Findings

The examined evidence demonstrates that the field experiences provided through the unit's programs include a variety of experiences that are connected to courses in the Education Program curriculum. It is evident that practical experiences happen early and often throughout a candidate's program of study. Fieldwork begins in the first semester of the candidates' program in conjunction with the career project completed for HUM 102, First Year Experience. Candidates continue with 75 additional field hours during the spring of their freshman and entire sophomore year. Twenty-five classroom hours are connected to labs in each of the following courses: *ED 100 Education Foundations*, *EDU 214 Classroom Communication* and *EDU 389 Classroom Management*. Additional fieldwork continues through the lab courses in candidates' junior and senior years. The evidence revealed that there is ample time in the field for candidates to demonstrate their proficiencies in the professional roles for which they are preparing prior to student teaching.

Co-requisite lab courses connected to methods courses provide rich opportunities for deliberate connections. Interviews with candidates, lab instructors and cooperating teachers reveal some evidence of purposeful, strategic links between methods courses, field experiences and lab courses. The clinical lab instructors spoke very highly of the benefit of these experiences in providing candidates with varied and multiple opportunities to apply their learning. While the written Field Experience Plan is helpful to understand the progression of fieldwork, interviews and evidence revealed some confusion about the number of hours, connections between courses and expectations of the early field work and lab courses. A more detailed Field Experience Plan would benefit all stakeholders of the unit.

The field placement experiences are arranged and supervised by the Director of Student Teaching. The reviewed evidence revealed strong relationships between the unit, school partners, and candidates. It is evident that this relationship is mutually beneficial and highly valued.

The Student Teaching Practicum Guide clearly articulates the expectations for the student teaching experience. An orientation meeting prepares candidates prior to beginning in their placements. Candidates are observed and evaluated during their Student Teaching Practicum by the Site Supervisor two to three times during each placement. While it is clear that candidates feel supported by faculty and mentors in their student teaching experience, a capstone seminar for candidates could further enhance the experience. Interviews revealed that cooperating teachers are very complimentary of UMFK candidates, their professional dispositions, knowledge base and initiative.

An evaluation system is in place to assess candidates in early field experiences, lab field experiences and student teaching. All of these evaluation measures clearly align with the MCCT standards. Cooperating teachers complete evaluations throughout each field experience and summative evaluation is completed at the conclusion of the individual experiences.

Candidates' portfolios included collections of artifacts methodically chosen to demonstrate their competency in each of the MCCT standards. The portfolios are assessed by all stakeholders including the candidate, peers, all members of the unit, and the mentor teacher. The multiple opportunities for feedback provide great depth to the candidate evaluation process during the Student Teaching Practicum.

Findings indicated that the unit produces skilled, knowledgeable, passionate and reflective educators.

B. Commendation:

- The unit is commended for its deliberate effort and commitment to ensuring that candidates have ample time in classrooms to apply their theoretical learning in an authentic context. The connections between theoretical and instructional frameworks are strong.

C. Recommendation:

- The unit should consider a capstone seminar experience during student teaching to allow candidates time to reflect on the experience in depth.
- The unit should consider including observations of candidates by a site supervisor during the field work component of lab courses to ensure the professional competency of all candidates in the field.

D. Review Team Decision

This Standard is *MET*.

Standard Four: Diversity

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools.

A. Findings

Given the geographic location of the University of Maine at Fort Kent and the demographics of the region in which it is located, the unit continues to make efforts both to attract a diverse student body and to provide students with the opportunities to experience and embrace ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender diversity on campus and to prepare them to be able, as educators, to recognize and meet the needs of students with diverse backgrounds.

The candidates within UMFK's Division of Education hail not only from Maine, but also from other states across the United States and from abroad. It consists of candidates pursuing a four-year Teacher Education program and those who, having already received an undergraduate degree, come to UMFK to earn their teacher certification. The size of the unit allows candidates not only to get to know each other, but also to work together on education-related projects and participate in activities aimed at helping them get well prepared as aspiring teachers.

An examination of the unit's curriculum points to the significant role that the unit plays in helping candidates develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in both teaching and learning. A broad array of topics and perspectives infused into a variety of content and methods courses that the unit offers helps candidates see and understand the interconnectedness of demographic, economic, and cultural factors, and prepares the future educators at the UMFK to recognize and meet the needs of diverse learners. Evidence demonstrates that candidates both learn about and are required to adapt instruction for all students. The collected evidence and the interviews with faculty, cooperating teachers, and candidates demonstrate candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions in relation to diverse learners. The candidates are taught to recognize and are expected to be able to address the developmental characteristics of learners and to employ above-mentioned multiple perspectives or other related strategies when teaching or planning educational experiences. Through partnerships with school districts, the unit's program has been designed to allow candidates to gain exposure to and experiences with diversity in various classroom settings. These contexts include la Cité des Jeunes in Edmundston and South Portland High School, schools that candidates visit while enrolled in EDU 477, *Multicultural Curriculum Design*.

During student teaching candidates are required to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to diversity through the *Summative Evaluation Based on the Eleven Standards for Beginning Teachers* and a summative *Portfolio Assessment*.

As a result of all these learning opportunities, candidates articulate a commitment to serving the needs of diverse learners.

B. Commendations

- The unit is commended for its efforts to actively promote diversity, despite the recognized difficulties with doing so due to geographical location and for striving to engage these issues not only in coursework and on-campus activities such as STEPS, but also in the local school districts and the community.

C. Recommendations.

None.

D. Review Team Decision

The standard is *MET*.

Standard Five: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development

Faculty are qualified and model best professional practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to candidate performance; they also collaborate with colleagues in the disciplines and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

A. Findings:

There are three full-time faculty members in the unit: Dr. Bruno G. Hicks serves as chair of the Education Division (the unit head), teaches in both the elementary (e.g. *Teaching of Science*, EDU 415) and secondary programs (e.g. *Secondary Education Methods I*, EDU 358), and teaches courses within the Biology/Environmental Studies program and the Honors program. Dr. Doris Metz serves as Director of Student Teaching and Early Practicums, teaches in both the elementary (e.g. *Teaching of Social Studies*, EDU 411) and secondary programs (e.g. *Secondary Education Methods II*, EDU 359), and teaches in the First Year Experience program. Dr. Paul Buck teaches *Multicultural Curriculum Design* (EDU 477), a required course in both the elementary and secondary programs, as well as courses in History and Spanish. In addition, Dr. Terry Murphy, a full-time faculty member in the English program, teaches *Literature of Childhood and Adolescence* (EDU/ENG 253). Besides the full-time faculty, the Education unit is supported by three adjunct faculty members: Dr. Roland Caron recently retired from UMFK and currently teaches *Education of Exceptional Children* (EDU 303), *Educational Psychology* (EDU 401), and *Intervention Strategies* (EDU/SED 403). Ms. Patricia Richard is a 42-year veteran teacher, recently retired, who teaches *Teaching of Mathematics* (EDU 412). Ms. Meranda Castonguay is a local elementary school teacher who serves as the instructor for *Reading for Elementary Teachers* (EDU 451) and *Writing for Elementary Teachers* (EDU 463), and also as a mentor for student teachers in the Elementary Education Program.

Qualifications of Faculty.

Collectively, the full-time unit faculty are involved in diverse service activities that range from divisional leadership to service on NEASC and other university-level committees such as the Institutional Research Board, the President's Cabinet, the Computing Advisory Committee, and the French Heritage Council. The unit faculty members are well connected with K-12 practitioners and communities. Examples of these connections include: serving as interim principal at St. Francis Elementary School during a sabbatical in 2008-2009; collaboration with *la Cité des Jeunes* in Edmundston to develop an experiential learning opportunity for the students in *Multicultural Curriculum Design* (ED 477); facilitating a collaboration between STEPS – Student Teachers Education Professional Society – and SAD 27, where students contributed to the Holocaust Survivor project. Moreover, it is clear that the unit faculty and adjunct faculty are quite familiar with local teachers and use this knowledge to guide their placement of students in lab experiences as well as student teaching.

The scholarship of the unit faculty is primarily grounded in their own instructional practice. For example, the unit head strives to communicate to teacher candidates that the work of teaching is subtle and requires deep thought. He encourages candidates to describe not only what teaching

practices they (or their mentors) implement, but to provide a rationale for those practices. Dr. Metz engages in curriculum design work with teacher candidates and has published some of this work. Dr. Buck facilitates thoughtful and rich discussion about texts and about concepts related to identity, ethnicity, race, and culture in his course. In addition, Dr. Buck has published several scholarly articles about Franco-American and Canadian history.

The unit has worked hard in recent years to involve local K-12 educators in the preparation of elementary and secondary teachers within the context of the Laboratory courses (one-credit courses that complement existing education courses). The cadre of clinical lab instructors includes local principals and teachers, a library/media specialist, a literacy coach, an academic success counselor, and a superintendent. All of these clinical lab instructors have expertise and practical experience working with K-12 learners in diverse settings. Both candidates and unit faculty report that the Lab courses have been challenging to design and when *initially* implemented there was sometimes inconsistency between Lab course content and topics addressed in the accompanying classes. Ms. Castonguay has worked closely with the clinical lab faculty who teach the Labs associated with her courses (EDU 451 and EDU 463) in order to ensure that the scope and sequence of both courses is well aligned. Other clinical lab faculty reported that they have collaborated with course instructors to ensure that field experiences are supportive of and reinforce course content. This level of collaboration seems to occur informally, however, and since it is so essential to providing a quality learning experience for teacher candidates, the program might be strengthened by formalizing this process.

While it is evident that the clinical lab instructors are highly skilled professionals, it is of note that 3 of the 11 instructors (Daigle, Nadeau, Richard) do not possess an advanced degree.

Modeling of Practice

The review team had an opportunity to observe several classes taught by unit faculty. The unit faculty members modeled strong practices in a variety of settings (e.g. a pedagogy course, a course about classroom management, a course about United States History). All unit faculty members demonstrated strong rapport with the teacher candidates in their classes, and the teacher candidates were actively engaged in the learning activities. In a meeting with Arts & Sciences faculty, the review team also learned that these faculty members are thoughtful about their pedagogical approaches and seek to engage learners in experiences that model authentic disciplinary reasoning, problem solving, and communication.

Assessment of Teaching

All UMFK students complete an evaluation of the courses that they take each semester. Course instructors and the unit head receive these evaluations. Tenured faculty members undergo peer review every four years. Part of this review includes evaluation of teaching effectiveness, where evidence of effectiveness is provided by the faculty member undergoing review. Tenure-stream faculty members participate in the review process on a yearly basis.

Because the unit head is the Director of the Education Division, he reviews candidate course evaluation data and has an opportunity to discuss concerns with unit faculty members. However, the unit has not compiled course evaluation data, nor do they have a systematic or regular forum within which to discuss this data, as it is not shared within the unit meetings.

Collaboration

Unit faculty members collaborate within the unit and across the other divisions within the University. Both Arts & Sciences faculty and unit faculty reported that the small size of UMFK, coupled with an overall institutional culture that values teaching, facilitates regular informal discourse about teaching practice. Within the unit, all full-time faculty members review the student teaching portfolios. This work enables the faculty members to build a shared understanding of the Maine Common Core Teaching Standards and to support one another's learning within this context. Education faculty members also meet monthly (during breakfast meetings) with their students and K-12 collaborators to discuss program concerns and share relevant information. This is an important community building strategy.

Professional Development. The unit faculty members actively engage in professional development. For example, Dr. Hicks regularly participated in program review work from 2000-2014; Dr. Buck presented his work at the Conference of the American Council for Québec Studies in 2014; Dr. Metz completed over 30 credit hours of work in the area of special education in recent years. Faculty members also maintain active membership to a variety of professional associations including Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Maine Educators Association, National Educators Association, International Reading Association, the Association for Canadian Studies in the United States, and the *Société historique de Canada* / Canadian Historical Association.

UMFK provides \$28,000 in professional development funds for its faculty annually. Unit faculty members can request access to these funds to attend professional conferences. Priority is given to faculty members who are presenting their scholarly work. It is not clear whether UMFK provides support to faculty members for engaging in professional development or presentation related to instructional practice and engaged scholarship. This might be a useful strategy for making the model practices exemplified by the Education unit faculty more visible to both their students (teacher candidates) and their colleagues across the UMFK.

B. Commendations

- The unit's accomplishments, especially the scholarship upon which the curriculum is based, in the area of Multicultural Curriculum Design is thought provoking. In particular, the ways in which cultural diversity is conceptualized as encompassing race, ethnicity, identity, disability status, and other factors of human experience is unique and pushes the boundaries of this field.
- The unit faculty members (including both full-time and adjunct faculty) are highly collaborative. They devote significant time to reviewing teaching portfolios, discussing program concerns, and interacting with students and K-12 educators.

C. Recommendations

- The highest degree held by 3 of the 11 clinical lab instructors and one of the adjunct faculty members is a Bachelor's. All faculty (full-time, clinical, and adjunct) should hold an advanced degree (Master's or Doctorate).

- Many of the clinical faculty have collaborated with course instructors to ensure that field experiences are supportive of and reinforce course content. This level of collaboration seems to occur informally, however, and since it is so essential to providing a quality learning experience for teacher candidates, this process should be a formal expectation for faculty who teach education labs and corresponding courses.
- Data related to course evaluation should be compiled and shared regularly with all members of the unit and used to guide curriculum design and instructional decision-making.

D. Review Team Decision.

This Standard is *MET*.

Standard Six: Unit Governance and Resources

The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

A. Findings.

Unit Governance

UMFK is part of a two-tiered organizational structure with the Board of Trustees governing seven campuses in the University of Maine System, and system decisions are passed on to the governing officers of UMFK, which include the President, Vice Presidents of Administration and Academic Affairs, and a Director for Human Resources.

UMFK's governing structure includes the faculty chairs, academic divisions, and various committees. With the Vice-President for Academic Affairs' (VPAA) approval, the Faculty Assembly determines academic policies within the University structure and is responsible for the curriculum, instructional methods, degree requirements, and certain aspects of student life related to the educational process.

The UMFK faculty is governed through four academic divisions: Arts & Humanities, Education, Professional Management, and Nursing. The Education Division elects a Division Chair from its membership. The chair belongs to the Council of Division Chairs that also includes the VPAA. They meet every two weeks to review budgets, initiate curriculum development, and conduct program reviews.

Governance: Education Division

The unit is made up of three core faculty members. Every three years, this body elects one of its members to serve as Chair of the Division, which is the unit head. This position serves as the leader of the division and oversees all aspects of the unit. The unit faculty members are responsible for the curriculum decisions, and are also responsible for decisions regarding qualifications for new hires and for decisions regarding adjunct faculty. The unit faculty has granted the unit head the authority to hire adjuncts with the consultation of faculty in the content area where the adjunct will teach.

The unit has its own budget (\$213,470 in January 2015) and the university allocates the funds needed to run an efficient program, including all aspects of the student teaching process. There is ample evidence that the unit is supported throughout the campus community. As an academic division, the unit has control of all aspects of the program needed to ensure the quality of academic programs and to run an efficient unit. UMFK administration is supportive of the unit's semester-based working dinner and breakfast, as a tool for growing relationships with partner schools as discussed in Standard Two.

Library Resources

There is ample evidence that the unit has access to a well-equipped library and associated services. Candidates and unit faculty both reported that the UMFK library is an excellent

resource. The candidates were very appreciative of having access to the Curriculum Center Collection, which provides classroom resources and materials for their field placement teaching. Listed below are many of the excellent resources available to the UMFK community.

- **Acadian Archives/*Archives Acadiennes*** This collection includes materials that document the culture, way of life, and history of the Upper St. John Valley.
- **Audio-Visual Materials** The Library has a growing collection of videocassettes, CDs, audiocassettes and vinyl records.
- **Circulating Collection** The majority of the Library's book holdings are in the circulating collection.
- **Curriculum Center Collection** This collection includes items for education students and teachers such as textbooks, manipulative and other classroom materials.
- **Juvenile Collection** The Juvenile Collection is located in the education center (see map) and includes materials for young readers.
- **Maine State Documents** The Blake Library is a depository for Maine State Documents.
- **Periodical Collection** Articles in periodicals may be found by searching the online indexes and databases.
- **Reference Collection** The Reference Collection includes books of highly organized factual information such as dictionaries and encyclopedias.
- **Special Collections** The Special Collections includes rare books and materials on the State of Maine and Aroostook County.
- **Young Adult Collection** The Library has recently created a Young Adult section for materials suited to adolescents and mature young readers.

Additional Services and Support

Not included in the Self Study were a variety of other valuable resources for the candidates.

The candidates are provided with and utilize a variety of resources from Student Support Services; including Tutoring Services, Career Services, Writing Lab, Counseling Services, and Disability Services. The review team found that Student Support Services is committed to assisting students to achieve academic and personal excellence at UMFK.

Additionally, candidates who are low income, first-generation students qualify for additional support in the TRIO program which focuses on strengthening and developing academic and self-management skills. Similarly, UMFK provides candidates that are admitted conditionally with the “Bridge for Success” summer program that works to prepare students for the academic rigor and transitions to higher education.

The review team observed appropriate facilities and technology for the program. There are appropriate offices, computer labs, and classrooms with integrated instructional technology. The faculty and candidates also have full access to campus IT support and wireless Internet.

There is sufficient evidence that the unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources to prepare their candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards. The Vice President of Academic Affairs is willing to continue supporting professional development for unit faculty, additionally in the form of sabbaticals or leave of absences that

lead to academic support of the unit. There was also support and encouragement for unit faculty to continue to seek external funding.

B. Commendations.

- The unit has appropriate governance and resources to meet expectations and has strong support from the administration of UMFK.

C. Recommendations.

None.

D. Review Team Decision.

This Standard is *MET*.

IV. Recommendation to the State Board of Education

During the site visit from March 22-25, 2015, the review team found all standards to be met.

The team was particularly impressed with the structure of the program, which includes early and frequent field placements that are strategically integrated with course work and led by field-based instructors. The team feels that serves the candidates well and prepares them for student teaching and reinforces the connections between theoretical and instructional frameworks. The assessment of dispositions used in conjunction with the unit's non-academic alert system is commendable given the challenge of assessing dispositions. The team found that this tool gives clear feedback to students and guides them toward action. It was clear to the review team that the program uses stakeholder input to make program changes on a regular basis and continually improve. The team was impressed with the caliber of the faculty and students and the depth of the partnerships inherent in the program. The team commends the program for its efforts to actively promote diversity, despite the recognized difficulties with doing so due to geographical location. Finally, it was clear that the unit has strong support from the administration of UMFK.

As is this review is part of the program's continuous improvement process, the team had the following recommendations. The unit should ensure that candidates have opportunities to offer and receive critical feedback about the discipline-specific conceptual or cognitive dimensions of instruction. That is to say, the team recommends that the unit look for ways in which students build pedagogical content knowledge of the various disciplines in order to move beyond a mechanistic view of teaching tools and strategies. The unit would be well served to more systematically collect, monitor, and follow up on candidate progress data at these benchmark points. The unit needs to more systematically gather and utilize direct observational evidence of candidates' performance in the field to inform programmatic decisions. The unit should consider a capstone seminar experience during student teaching to allow candidates time to reflect on the experience in depth.

Finally, the team created three recommendations related to faculty (both full and part-time). Specifically, all faculty members (full-time, clinical, and adjunct) should hold an advanced degree (Master's or Doctorate). Second, collaboration between full and part-time instructors should be a formal expectation for faculty who teach education labs and corresponding courses. Third, data related to course evaluation should be compiled and regularly shared in aggregate form with all members of the unit and used to guide curriculum design and instructional decision-making.

In summary, the review team recommends that the State Board of Education renew approval for UMFK's teacher education programs for the full five year term and grant approval for the new math education program for the same five year term.

V. List of individuals Interviewed and Sources of Evidence

A. Individuals Interviewed

Administration

- Wilson Hess, President
- Robert Dixon, Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Doris Metz, Director of Student Teaching
- Lena Michaud, Director of Student Success
- Mark Schenk, Registrar
- At opening breakfast:
 - John Murphy, Vice President for Administration
 - Eleanor Hess, Assistant Dean of Student Success

Faculty (full-time and part-time)

- Bruno Hicks
- Doris Metz
- Paul Buck
- Roland Caron
- Meranda Castonguay
- Robby Nadeau
- Mitchell Daigle
- Kim Borges
- Joseph Becker
- Geraldine Becker
- Shawn Graham
- Krishna Kaphle
- Nicole Boudreau
- Ben Lothrop
- Tammy Lothrop
- Lisa Bernier
- Tracie Boucher
- Timothy Doak
- Pamela Plourde

Partner Teachers (hosts and mentors)

- Don Chouinard
- Mary Pelletier
- Rory Collings
- Deborah Gendreau
- Cathy Daigle
- Patricia Richards

Students

- Carly Pinette
- Anna Peabody
- Matthew Anderson
- Jessica Sirois
- Christina Beaulieu
- Nivetha Neminathan

- Danielle Carrillo
- Fletcher Brown
- Jamie Reid
- Justin Soontiens
- Leigha Boyd
- Kelly Gross

B. Sources of Evidence Reviewed: